

# A little planning can help avoid a financial crisis

by Scott Lebin

The focus of this issue of *Neighbors of Geneva* is to highlight the achievements of individuals who against great odds were able to attain success and achievement in their lives. What inspirational stories are told that make us wonder if we under similar circumstances would have the fortitude and the ability to overcome such barriers. Financial struggles often raise the same issues because we too wonder if we are ever going to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

What are some of the financial issues we face that present us with this feeling of insecurity and concern as though we have unconquerable odds to overcome to survive financially? When home values plummeted, many homeowners found themselves under water in their mortgages. This reality brought many people to an emotional edge. Then some of these same individuals lost their jobs. A compounding emotional crisis was upon them. It is difficult to think that things could get any worse unless they happen to discover that in addition these two events they are also facing a medical crisis that adds more worry to their lives. It is at times like these when some of us can begin to understand the great financial emotional pressures that can happen to even those who think of themselves as very successful.

How we prepare for these moments before they occur are some of the opportunities we have as we discuss our financial preparation for worse case scenarios. If we lose our job, how much saved money have we slowly accumulated

so that we can still pay our mortgage and put food on the table for a period of at least six months if not longer? This sometimes slow accumulation of saved money is our emergency money to save us from an unexpected crisis in the future. It is never too early to start such savings even if it is a small amount taken out of each pay check.

How do we protect ourselves if we become physically disabled and lose our job because of disability? We make sure that if our employer doesn't provide some kind of group disability insurance, we explore the possibility of owning an individual disability policy to cover a portion of our income stream.

If we get disabled in a car accident by an uninsured motorist, we make sure that we have coverage for uninsured motorists on our own policy. That will allow us to have some income to make up for what could be a devastating loss of income and a devastating cost of medical care should we be hit by someone with no insurance.

As we review the stories of people who overcame great odds in their

life, we also become aware that in a worst case scenario, there are individuals who have faced a life that seems to be so traumatic that survival seems to be impossible. However, they have not only survived but with fortitude have created a life that was unimaginable only a few years earlier.

We plan for our future but we also know that we as human beings have a tremendous ability to overcome what seems insurmountable odds to move forward with our lives. We adjust, we reorganize, we seek help from our community, we gather physical resources from our family, and we change our life for the positive. This is as much a mental state as a financially physical reality. The stories in this month's magazine attest the ability to overcome the worst financial result that life throws in our path.

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